

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

Yellow fever in New Orleans, La.Orleans

The following telegram was received July 18 by the Bureau from Surgeon A. C. Smith, stationed at New Orleans:

Rumors yellow fever New Orleans. Can learn nothing definite. Letter follows.

Surgeon Smith was immediately instructed to make an investigation and to keep the Bureau informed.

Dr. Edmond Souchon, president of the Louisiana State Board of Health, at New Orleans, wired the Bureau July 19, as follows:

Look for letter by to-day's mail.

In order to secure more definite information as to the state of affairs in New Orleans, Surgeon White, at Mobile, Ala., was telegraphed on the morning of July 21:

Employ acting assistant surgeon and proceed immediately to New Orleans and put yourself in communication with the State health authorities and the local board of health. Quietly investigate rumor, ascertain as soon as possible and wire information cases suspected yellow fever. Passed Assistant Surgeon Francis has been ordered to report to you for duty at Mobile. Wire dates of departures and arrivals and address.

Dr. Edmond Souchon, New Orleans, president of Louisiana State board of health was informed, July 21, that Surg. J. H. White, of the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, had been ordered to New Orleans to confer with him and the local health authorities and to look over the situation. Doctor Souchon was requested to afford Surgeon White every facility for his investigation and the screening of fever cases pending diagnosis, and the destruction of mosquitoes in suspected localities was suggested.

A telegram was received July 21 from Surgeon Smith containing the following statement:

Alabama health officers visited city to-day and made investigation; announced to have seen 2 cases. Alabama will probably declare quarantine.

July 21 a letter was received, under date of July 19, from Dr. Edmond Souchon, president Louisiana State Board of Health, in which he stated:

(New Orleans)

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I write to inform you that a few cases presenting symptoms of yellow fever have come to my knowledge here. The cases are all in the same neighborhood—about two or three blocks. An autopsy will be held at the first opportunity. In the meantime the city health officer is taking all the necessary steps to destroy the mosquitoes in the localities. *

Upon receipt of this information the Bureau telegraphed the facts, July 21, to Dr. William H. Saunders, State health officer, Montgomery, Ala.; State Health Officer Tabor, Austin, Tex.; Dr. J. F. Hunter, secretary State board of health, Jackson, Miss., and Dr. Rhett Goode, president quarantine board of Mobile Bay, Mobile, Ala. State Health Officer J. Y. Porter, of Florida, was also notified. In the same dispatch these officers were directed to investigate all cases of fever in their localities, to advise screening the cases until the establishment of diagnosis, and to make prompt report to the Bureau.

χ The following dispatch was received July 22 from Surgeon White:

Referring your telegram, went yesterday, found 2 cases undoubted yellow fever, and believe many more exist. Address, St. Charles Hotel.

On the same date Surgeon Guiteras, at Cairo, Ill., Passed Assistant Surgeon Richardson, at Savannah, Ga., and Passed Assistant Surgeon Corput, at the Marine Hospital, New Orleans, were ordered to report to Surgeon White for duty in connection with the outbreak.

State Health Officer Tabor of Texas acknowledged the receipt of the information from the Bureau and stated that he had established quarantine against New Orleans, and Dr. J. F. Hunter, secretary State board of health of Mississippi, at Jackson, acknowledged the information and requested the placing of inspectors on trains leaving New Orleans.

The same day, July 22, the following telegram was sent to Dr. Eduardo Liceaga, president, superior board of health, Mexico City, and to Dr. Carlos Finlay, president of the superior board of health, Habana, Cuba:

Service officers confirm 2 cases yellow fever in New Orleans.

A telegram of July 22 from Surgeon Smith, at New Orleans, stated:

Witnessed necropsy at Charity Hospital; findings positive yellow fever.

On same date the following message was received from Doctor Souchon, president of the State board of health:

Postmortem held at 12 o'clock; findings positive, but not typical.

Information was communicated by telegraph, July 22, to the following Service officers that the occurrence of several cases of yellow fever had been confirmed at New Orleans: Acting Asst. Surg. C. A. Sheely, Gulfport, Miss.; Acting Asst. Surg. B. F. Duke, Pascagoula, Miss.; Acting Asst. Surg. R. H. Gray, Shreveport, La.; Acting Asst. Surg. B. J. Hicks, Vicksburg, Miss., and Acting Assistant Surgeon Watkins, Natchez, Miss.

July 23 the following telegram was received from Dr. J. F. Hunter, secretary Mississippi State board of health, Jackson:

Autopsy confirms diagnosis at New Orleans. Am sure situation grave enough to need inspectors on all outgoing trains. Please put them on.

The Bureau replied as follows:

Bureau has directed Surgeon White, at New Orleans, to place inspectors on all trains from New Orleans through Mississippi.

Surgeon Wasdin, stationed at Memphis, was directed, July 23, to take first train for Mobile, confer with local health authorities, and then to inspect all points between Mobile, as far as Pass Christian, but not to enter New Orleans. Surgeon Wasdin arrived at Mobile on Monday night, July 24, held conference, and is proceeding on this duty.

In accordance with request received from him at New Orleans, after his conference with Governor Blanchard and the health authorities of Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas, Surgeon White was authorized, July 24, to establish 4 small detention camps at Kenner, Avondale, Waveland, and Slidell, and Surgeon Smith, at New Orleans, was directed to confer with Surgeon White and at once ship to these points 4 small complete detention camps, which had been for the past year in readiness at Fontainebleau, Miss., and to expedite the loading and shipment.

The action of Sanitary Inspector J. Y. Porter, in quarantining all vessels from New Orleans arriving at Florida ports, was approved July 24, and instructions were issued to the medical officers at Tampa Bay quarantine and Cape Charles quarantine to the same effect.

The following letter dated July 22 was received at the Bureau July 24 from Surgeon Smith, New Orleans:

I have the honor to report upon the events of the present week which have led to the establishment of quarantine against the city of New Orleans by health boards of neighboring States.

In the forenoon of Tuesday, July 18, I was informed that there were rumors of the existence of yellow fever in a block bounded by Decatur, Chartres, Ursulines, and St. Philip streets, and that there had been deaths. I visited the region in the afternoon, and on one door saw a death notice. A woman standing by volunteered information about the character of the man's sickness and the mode of death, which made the case look very much like yellow fever. The block described is occupied mostly by Sicilians, and they are very secretive, and I believe do not always call a physician in case of sickness. I thought it best to go directly to the president of the city board of health, Dr. Quitman Kohnke. He said there had been no diagnosis of yellow fever made by any physician, and no report of death from that disease, but said there was talk of suspicious cases, and that he was fumigating rooms wherever he heard of any sickness in the quarter of the city described. I then sent my first telegram to the Bureau. (See telegram July 18, 1905.)

On Wednesday, July 19, I went to see Dr. Edmond Souchon, president of the State board of health. He showed me a letter which he had written to the Bureau announcing that there had been four or five cases suspected of being yellow fever, but that no diagnosis of that disease had been made. He informed me that he had also telegraphed the Bureau, and had telegraphed and written to the State health officers of Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. I asked him to let me see some of the suspicious cases, and he replied that that matter was in charge of Doctor Kohnke, and that Doctor Kohnke would undoubtedly let me do so. I immediately applied to Doctor Kohnke and asked him to let me see some cases. He said he would be very glad to do so if he had control of any, but they were all in the practice of private physicians, who would not consent to have their cases investigated.

Thursday afternoon I received a telephone message from a prominent business man, asking me to meet him in the evening for conference at the office of the city board of health. I hoped that this meant that something would be given out concerning conditions in the city and the plans of the board of health, but in this I was disappointed. The same night I received a message from Doctor Souchon to meet him the next morning, and on Friday morning he telephoned me that health officers from Alabama had arrived in the city to make an investigation, and invited me to meet them and join in the investigation. Some cases were to be shown us, and there would probably be a necropsy. When I reached the office of the State board of health Doctor Souchon was absent, but I saw Dr. G. F. Patton, secretary of the board, and surgeon J. H. White, of the service, and two health officers representing the State of Alabama and the city of Mobile.

They visited one of the hospitals and made a tour of the suspected district, accompanied by Dr. A. Nolte, of the State board of health, with the result reported in my letter of yesterday. Quarantine is reported to have been instituted against New Orleans by the city of Mobile at 3.45 p. m., and the conference between the visiting and local health officers and others, reported in my letter of yesterday, took place about 4 to 5 p. m.

This morning (Saturday) Doctor Souchon invited me to witness a necropsy at Charity Hospital at noon. Positive evidence of yellow fever was found, as already wired by me.

I report these matters in detail because I desire that the Bureau should have as complete a history of the events of the week as possible. I neglected to wire information of rumors, because I was constantly hoping to get hold of facts which would be more definite and satisfactory than any I had.

From Pascagoula, Miss., Acting Assistant Surgeon Duke reported, July 23, that no suspicion of yellow fever existed, that the State of Mississippi had instituted land quarantine against New Orleans, and that the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service was expected to supervise the river and bay. In response to this letter, Dr. Duke was informed July 26 that Surgeon White had been instructed to make quarantine inspection of vessels leaving New Orleans for up-river and lake ports.

July 24 Surgeon White was instructed by telegraph as follows:

Do not overlook steamboat inspection from New Orleans. Arrange for same. Commence wiring daily report local situation, number cases, and other pertinent facts; also whether house-to-house inspection being made, screening fever cases, and destruction mosquitoes.

In response the following telegram was received:

Attempting to disinfect rooms occupied by suspicious cases; screening rooms and oiling cisterns not effective, but will assist and endeavor to make it so. Authorities concede 12 cases, these and many more doubtless genuine cases, 8 deaths, it being impossible to trace any communications from one to another, and new foci being now found outside quarter by St. Peter, Dauphine hospital, and Decatur. Think admission of cases will be more fully made within next forty-eight hours.

The Bureau, recognizing the danger of importation of yellow fever from Colon, Isthmus of Panama, and the Central American ports from which vessels arrive at ports in the United States with perishable fruit cargoes, stationed sanitary officers early in the spring, as is customary, at these ports for the purpose of keeping it informed regarding health conditions and taking precautionary measures.

Of interest in this connection is the fact that May 9 the fruit steamer *Preston*, bound from Colon to New Orleans via Bocas, refused fumigation at Colon. The bill of health was withheld by the service officer there, so the *Preston* sailed without one. On her arrival at New Orleans a fine was imposed under the provisions of section 1, act approved February 15, 1893.

May 25 a cablegram dated May 24 was received from Acting Assistant Surgeon Carson, an experienced officer from New Orleans, stationed at Belize, British Honduras, stating that there had been 2 cases and 1 death from yellow fever at Belize. Immediately upon its receipt this information was telegraphed to Dr. Edmond Souchon, president of the Louisiana State board of health, to the health authorities of Alabama, Texas, and Florida, and to the medical officer of the Service at Gulf quarantine.

On May 26 a cablegram of date May 25 was received from Acting Assistant Surgeon Carter, Puerto Cortez:

Four yellow fever, 1 death Cortez.

This information was wired the same day to President Souchon, Louisiana State board of health, New Orleans; Dr. Henry Goldthwaite, health and executive officer, quarantine board, Mobile Bay, Alabama; State Health Officer Tabor, Austin, Tex.; Sanitary Inspector Porter, Key West, Fla., and the Service officer at Gulf quarantine station.

The quarantine officer, Fortress Monroe, Va., was telegraphed July 24 to fumigate and detain all vessels from New Orleans. If in cargo and for bunker coal to fumigate the living quarters only and to seal the hatches and notify the Norfolk quarantine authorities to that effect.

A telegram dated July 24 was sent to the quarantine officer at Tampa Bay directing the fumigation of all vessels from New Orleans, and their detention for five full days or longer if found to have sickness aboard. All Florida ports are quarantining against vessels from New Orleans.

The Bureau received information July 25 from Surgeon White that there had been 8 known deaths from yellow fever to that date, and new foci were being found outside of the originally infected locality.

By later telegram of July 25, Surgeon White states that the State board of health reported 54 cases and 12 deaths up to and including July 24; that house to house inspection was limited to the 40 or 50 blocks infected, and that screening and mosquito destruction were promised. He also states that freight is not at present being disinfected, and that car fumigation, camp outfits, and general-utility measures are being arranged for under direction of Surgeon Guitérás. Surgeon Smith telegraphed, July 25, that cars with 4 camp outfits were moving into New Orleans.

On July 26 Surgeon White was informed by telegraph from the Bureau that a cablegram had been received from Dr. Carlos Finlay, president of the superior board of health of Cuba, stating that Dr. John Guitéras had been ordered to New Orleans to represent the Cuban Government, and Surgeon White was instructed to extend to him every facility.

From Scranton, Miss., Acting Assistant Surgeon Duke reported, July 26, that there was little fever present; that cases were all negative, health conditions were good, and river was being guarded.

The last telegram received from Surgeon White, July 26, reported the existence of 11 foci in the city of New Orleans, including the large original focus of 20 blocks, and 2 additional foci in Algiers.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY REPORTS.

Status and progress of epidemics.

Yellow fever.—The measures adopted in consequence of the presence of yellow fever in New Orleans, La., as well as the status of the outbreak, are detailed in the preceding report.

The last prevalence of yellow fever in New Orleans was in 1899, in which year 115 cases were reported, with 20 deaths between August 27 and December 9.

A telegram, dated July 23, 1905, states that a schooner from Colon for Pascagoula arrived the day before at the national quarantine station, Ship Island, Mississippi, having had 1 death aboard from yellow fever. There was also 1 case of the disease aboard on arrival.

An official telegram announces that the steamship *Columbia*, from Colon and La Boca, arrived at quarantine, Mobile Bay, July 24, with 4 cases of yellow fever aboard. The vessel with all aboard was remanded to the national quarantine station, Ship Island, Mississippi.

The largest prevalence of yellow fever during the present season is at San Pedro, about 20 miles from Puerto Cortez, Honduras, on the railroad line that runs from that port along the Chamelicon River. About 400 cases have been reported from San Pedro with a mortality of over 25 per cent. Cases were declared July 14 at Choloma, a small town on the railroad, about 5 miles from San Pedro. Honduras is a country that has always been remarkably exempt from yellow fever, and hence has a large nonimmune population.

As bearing on the relative natural resistance of white persons and negroes to the disease, it is observable, both at San Pedro and Puerto Cortez, that the proportion of deaths among the former is much lower than among the latter. In a recent report from Maracaibo, Venezuela, the American consul says that Europeans in that country are more likely to recover from the disease when attacked than are the natives from the Cordilleras. At Belize, British Honduras, there were 2 cases and 1 death from yellow fever for the week ending July 13.